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ABSTRACT

This study examines attitudes about maternal employment by comparing the responses of married parents from single versus two-paycheck families. Participants in this study were 138 mothers and 120 fathers given the Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children Scale (BACMEC), which assesses views about maternal employment. Among the fathers surveyed, significant differences emerged in both the Cost and Benefits summary scales. Fathers from two-paycheck families perceived greater benefits associated with maternal employment than did fathers from single paycheck families. Fathers from two-paycheck families perceived fewer costs associated with maternal employment than did fathers from single paycheck families. Mothers' responses yielded a significant group difference on the benefits summary scale. Mothers from two-paycheck families perceived greater benefits associated with maternal employment than did mothers from single paycheck families. The results of the analysis indicate that participants' attitudes about maternal employment are generally congruent with their chosen lifestyles. In addition, on many of the BACMEC items, the responses from men whose wives did not work reflected the most negative attitudes about maternal employment. (Contains 49 references.) (Author)

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Single versus Dual Paycheck: Married Parents' Attitudes Maternal Employment

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Abstract

This study examined attitudes about maternal employment by comparing the responses of married parents from single versus two-paycheck families. Participants in this study were 138 mothers and 120 fathers given the BACMEC, which assesses views about maternal employment (Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children scale, Greenberger et al., 1988). Among the fathers surveyed, significant differences emerged on both the Cost and Benefits summary scales. Fathers from two-paycheck families perceived greater benefits associated with maternal employment than did fathers from single paycheck families. Fathers from two-paycheck families perceived fewer costs associated with maternal employment than did fathers from single paycheck families. Mothers' responses yielded a significant group difference on the benefits summary scale. Mothers from two-paycheck families perceived greater benefits associated with maternal employment than did mothers from single paycheck families. No significant difference was found on the costs summary scale between mothers from single-paycheck and two-paycheck families. The results of the analysis indicate that participants' attitudes about maternal employment are generally congruent with their chosen lifestyles. In addition, on many of the BACMEC items, the responses from men whose wives did not work were reflected the most negative attitudes about maternal employment.

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Introduction

In recent decades, the percentage of mothers in the workforce has increased gradually. When the specific ages of the children were considered, National Labor Statistics figures indicate that in 1996, fulltime employed mothers with children under the age of 6 was 43 percent, while the percentage of mothers working part-time with children under 6 was 20 percent. Among married mothers 46 percent worked fulltime, and 21 percent worked part-time.

Harr (1999) found that children of part-time employed mothers demonstrated better adjustment than children of full-time employed mothers, when mothers resumed working after their children were school-aged. However, parents' education levels were more influential than maternal occupational status in predicting children's adjustment. Children of mothers satisfied with their life roles, particularly their parenting roles, outperformed children of less satisfied mothers. This study suggests the importance of considering parents' attitudes toward and reactions to maternal employment. Several recent studies have investigated maternal employment from the standpoint of parents. While both marital partners are likely to experience increased family demands with the birth of a child, parental responsibilities usually fall disproportionately on married women (Kamo, 1988). To manage the increased responsibilities associated with parenting a newborn, a new mother may leave the workforce. While this decision may offer more time to manage childcare, and possibly provide higher quality childcare than a daycare facility might afford, it decreases the family's standard of living. A non-employed mother may negatively affect her future employment opportunities and future earnings (Lehrer, 1992), as well as her job involvement and organization commitment (Gould & Werbel, 1983). Leaving the workforce also often reduces a mother's level of social contact and support. However, if maternal employment is chosen, the new mother is likely to experience role overload and family conflicts. Research shows that employed women are more likely to experience both work and family conflicts than employed men (Duxberry, Higgins, & Lee, 1994; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, Granrose, Rabinowitz, & Beutell, 1989). The higher levels of personal stress may negatively affect career satisfaction (Peluchette, 1993; Aryee & Luk, 1996) and may have negative costs and consequences on marital satisfaction (Schumm & Bugaighis, 1986).

Holcomb (1998) argued that despite the lack of empirical evidence, the media often conveysnegative and false information about dual-income families, and working mothers in particular. Dual-income couples are often depicted as lacking time for one another and their children, and as being selfish and materialistic. Their children are often portrayed as desperate for love and attention, and as being cared for by surrogate childcare providers. The media also often disseminate disturbing, exaggerated, and incorrect information about the outcomes for children of two-paycheck families (Holcomb, 1998; Galinsky, 1999).

Many studies have been conducted to determine what people's attitudes are toward issues associated with mothers in the work place. One study conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates in October of 1999, via phone interviews, examined how adults felt about "traditional roles" within a family. This study included a sample of 1,411 adults.

Interviewees were read the statement, "I have old-fashioned values about family and marriage," and were asked to respond "completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree". The results showed that 53% of the respondents said they completely agree, 31% said they mostly agree, 9% said they mostly disagree, 5% said they completely disagree, and 2% didn't know (Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1999). This

indicates that the majority of adults sampled (84%) described themselves as having "old-fashioned values."

When the same group was presented with the following statement, "Women should return to their traditional roles in society," 9% completely agreed, 16% mostly agreed, 23% mostly disagreed, 48% completely disagreed, and 4% didn't know. Surprisingly, of the 53% of the individuals that were in complete agreement about having "old-fashioned values" about family and marriage, only 9% completely agreed that women should return to their traditional roles in society (Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1999).

A second study that was conducted examined how people felt about the amount time a child spends in daycare. This study also conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates (1999), had a sample size of 985 adults that were interviewed over the phone between September and October of 1999. The respondents were asked to listen to the following statement: "Too many children are being raised in daycare centers these days." Roughly two-thirds completely or mostly agreed, 22 % disagreed, and 3% didn't know. The majority agreed that, "Too many children are being raised in daycare centers these days."

A third study conducted by Public Agenda (2000) examined attitudes of 815 parents with children aged five or younger to see how they felt about childcare arrangements, attention received by children, and commitment of mothers. This study was conducted via phone interviews in June of 2000. One of the questions was, "Which one of these would you say is the best childcare arrangement during a child's early years?" The choices were, "one parent at home, both parents work, both parents work different shifts, close relatives, quality daycare, mom in neighborhood, or babysitter at home."

The results indicated that, 70% favored one parent at home, 14% favored both parents work different shifts, 6% preferred childcare by close relatives, 6% preferred quality daycare, 2% mom in neighborhood, or 2% favored having s babysitter at home (Public Agenda, 2000). Not one parent chose, "both parents working".

When the same group of 815 parents was asked, "Which children are more likely to get the affection and attention that they need?", the choices were: "Children with a stay at home parent, a well trained childcare employee, or about the same." Of the 815 parents interviewed, 80% chose a stay at home parent, 1% chose a well-trained daycare, 18% felt they were about the same, and 1% didn't know. The responses also indicate a preference for stay at home moms (Public Agenda, 2000, para.2).

This group of 815 parents was also given the following statement, "Mothers who work outside the home are just as loving and committed to their children as those who stay at home and were asked to respond either "agree" or "disagree". Then the participants were asked to respond they "strongly agree", or "strongly disagree". The results were: 74% of mothers strongly agreed, 17% somewhat agreed, 5% some what disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed, and 1% didn't know. This study shows that the parents from this sample felt that it is best for children to have one parent at home; however, they do not feel that mothers who work outside the home lack a commitment to their children (Public Agenda, 2000).

Another phone interview conducted by *The Washington Post* during the months of August and September of 1997, with a sample size of 1,202 adults, asked if they agreed, or disagreed with the statement, "It may be necessary for mothers to be working because the family needs the money, but it would be better if she could stay at home and just take care of the house and children" (Washington Post, 1997). The results for women were: 46% strongly agreed, 15% some what disagreed, 16% strongly disagreed, and 2% had no opinion. For men the results

were: 43% strongly agreed, 26% somewhat agreed, 17% some what disagreed, 12% strongly disagreed, and 2% had no opinion.

Based on the results presented in the previous four phone studies, it seem that most of the adults interviewed feel that the best possible care for young children is given by one of the parents. Even though phone interviews can be an efficient way of gathering information from subjects from many different areas, there are also problems associated with this method of obtaining data. One of the problems is the time of the day the study is being conducted. For example, if it is done between the hours of nine to five, the interviewer would most likely reach a stay at home parent. Another problem is when you reach someone willing to take the interview, it can be someone with very strong opinions about the issue, not necessary a person representing the "norm". Finally, there could be a problem within the rater reliability. For example, the way the interviewer reads the questions: (e.g. his or her tone of voice) could bias responses.

In addition to studies on the effects of maternal employment on children and women, several researchers have elected to focus on the effects of maternal employment on fathers. Many contend that dual-career couples experience increased levels of internal conflict within the family. Pleck, Staines, and Lang (1980) found that 34% of employed husbands and 37% of employed wives were likely to report that their jobs and families interfered with one another. Having children in the home generates added demands on spouses in dual-income families to share parenting responsibilities; the time necessary to meet child-care necessities must be added to both work schedules. The situation is less of a problem in single-income families in which primary child-care responsibilities are typically delegated to the non-employed spouse.

In a study assessing dual income families, Broom (1998) had 71 couples of either dual-income or single-income status who had recently had their first child agree to be studied for marital quality, psychological well-being, and parental sensitivity. Assessments were conducted when the child was 3 months old and again when the child was 2.5 years old. The objective of this study was to determine whether parental sensitivity differs in single-earner and dual-earner families. The results indicated that at the 3-month mark, employed mothers were more sensitive to their children than unemployed mothers. No differences in sensitivity emerged at the 2.5 years assessment. When children were 2.5 years in age, dual-earner parents had lower marital quality than single-earner parents. Marital quality was positively associated with parental sensitivity at both phases of the study. It was concluded that regardless of the employment status of the mother, well-educated middle-class parents tended to provide more sensitive parenting. Marital quality and psychological well being were found to be very important for sensitive parenting for both dual-earner and single-earner families.

In a study by Schoen, et al. (2003), the interactions among women's employment, marital happiness, and divorce were studied. The researchers wanted to determine whether or not happy marriages are being affected by wives' working full time. Full-time employment was looked at due to the fact that it can create a 'greater attachment' than part-time employment. Schoen et al. found that marriage trouble often occurred within the first year of full-time employment. This happened only when the perceived happiness of the marriage was not taken into consideration. If the marriage was happy before the wives' employment, maternal employment did not significantly affect the relationship. On the other hand, if either the husband or the wife was not happy beforehand, wives'full-time employment increases the risk of marital dissolution.

The connection between marital quality and job satisfaction were compared in a study by Rogers and May (2003), which showed that marital quality can influence behavior at the work setting. There was also evidence showing that dissatisfaction at work can spillover to the family

setting. Negative feelings of anxiety and/ or withdrawal in a marriage can lead to negativity at work and positive feelings from home can influence work as well. Can having two full-time workers result in more dissatisfaction within the marriage?

Nontraditional women were found to have greater emotional bonding with their husbands (Rhoden, 2003). These families were found to develop a greater enjoyment of shared time together, flexibility, and communication. Partners in the nontraditional marriages compromised more and showed less insistence on having their own way. This study also showed the importance of learning these roles early in marriage.

Wives who made over 50% of the family income did not have a significantly increased risk of divorce. Although divorce rates have been increasing, divorcees are highly likely to remarry, which shows that people still value marriage (Cherlin, 1992). Lastly, although both the divorce rate and the rate of dual paycheck families are increasing, there is no empirical evidence to link the two phenomena together.

The dominant presence of mothers as children's primary caregivers has encouraged the belief that a fathers' involvement with their children is of little importance. However, because of the dramatic increase in the proportion of mothers entering the work force, an egalitarian model of the family may be becoming more appropriate. Fathers are increasingly expected to play an important role in nurturing children. These changes have led to different family structures as well as to different expectations and beliefs about the roles of fathers. In addition, Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, and Lamb (2000) maintain that as mothers shift from being the primary caregivers to being co-parents, developmental theories that place mothers as the central influence on children's lives must be revised. Furthermore, with both parents now working and mothers spending less time with their children, it is suggested that the extent of father involvement fathers will increase.

According to Clark and Grych (1999), fathers whose wives did not work outside the home or worked part time were more sensitive and responsive to their children when they were more involved in care giving. Men whose wives worked full time exhibited more negative affect and behavior when they participated in child care. In addition, when studying the relationship of father's involvement with their young children over a longer period of time, it was found that fathers seem to be more involved when it comes to social interaction (play). Furthermore, when a 4-year study was conducted on children from infancy to age five, it was found that when mother were employed fathers were more involved in social interaction (play) than in care giving. However, parental involvement in care giving increased over time, whereas social interaction did not (Bailey, 1994). When also looking at father's involvement in their children lives, it is also necessary to take into account the gender of the child, and how that might also affect the level of fathers' involvement. For example, a study of gender differences in weekday father involvement in dual-earner households showed fathers to be available to sons significantly more than daughters.

In an effort to provide a child with the best possibilities and to give them a more rounded experience, parents have begun to arrange a demanding schedule. Not only does this include school, but there are also traveling sports teams, music lessons, dance and karate classes, and homework. Youth who are highly involved may not even have the opportunity to eat with their family or spend time with their friends. Empirical research on this topic is scarce, but a large amount of opinion articles regarding this issue have been written.

A weekday of constant activity tends to disrupt a child's natural sleeping patterns. (CNN report, 2003). This can be detected in various ways, including an increasing incidence of

children's falling asleep during the day or at school. The problem may also be expressed in other ways, such as difficulty falling asleep, a change in eating habits, change in mood, or developing problems between the child and their siblings or friends. Any of these problems, if left unchecked, can easily escalate, preventing the child from maintaining an appropriate energy level and making them more prone to behavioral problems.[1]

Because of the emphasis of activities outside the home; children who are active in unstructured ways often miss the chance to play. As discussed by Chastain (2002), children need the chance to occupy themselves using their imagination and creativity, "Children need time to create their own games and also to learn to entertain themselves. Often within playtime, the children have a chance to release stress and discover interests or talents such as drawing or painting. Chastain suggests that when no activity is scheduled, the child has the opportunity to develop their interests and tolearn to relax. Often overlooked, play is an integral part of childhood. A child's play time should involve interaction with other children in the neighborhood or with a sibling. These interactions allow a child to learn how to handle social interactions in a stress-free environment. As Heffer (2003) suggests, free time gives children the opportunity to build relationships with family and friends and acquire social skills. A variety of interests and activities can encourage a healthy balance in a child. As they get older, the activities are an integral part of their life and can promote physical fitness and mental development. However, the overzealous parent can hurt their child rather than help if there is no "downtime".

Previous research on attitudes about maternal employment has indicated significant differences among children raised in dual-income versus single-income families (Fleming, Farrell, Fronheiser, DiBlasi, Fields, Eddy, Denis, Hemperly, Strauss, Maggi, & Chambliss, 2003; Farrell, Lindquist, Strauss, Gorton, McCauley, Nyce, Johnson, Covert, Maggi, Fields, Eddy, Black, Denis, & Chambliss, 2003; Gambone, Gelband, Farrell, Black, Szuchyt, Aivazian, Lang, Nyce, Johnson, Thomas, Arena, Weiner, Zohe, Cane, & Chambliss, 2002). Most of these studies have found a strong loyalty effect. Children tend to express attitudes that support their own family's lifestyle. An examination of parents' attitudes would help to clarify whether all members of dual-income versus single-income families hold similar views.

The current investigation assessed the attitudes about maternal employment among married parents. Responses from fathers and mothers were analyzed separately, and the answers of parents from single-paycheck families and dual-paycheck families were compared.

Method

The participants in this study were 138 female and 120 male married parents. Seventy-five of the men had wives who were employed and 21 of the men had wives who were non-employed. Households in local urban and suburban neighborhoods were randomly sampled. Married parents were asked to fill out a packet containing various questionnaires assessing aspects of the their lives, how they viewed themselves, and their views on maternal employment. The packet used in this study consisted of five different parts.

In part one, subjects were asked to provide demographic information and to answer questions concerning their career and family. These questions required subjects to disclose information concerning their family employment status, job type, job characteristics, and work

preference based on the age of their youngest child. Subjects were also asked 10 questions concerning their attitudes toward their mother and father. These questions required subjects to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement on a 4 point Likert scale.

Part two of the packet was made up of the BACMEC questionnaire (Greenberger et al., 1988). The BACMEC is a 24-item scale developed to measure Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children. The BACMEC included beliefs about both benefits (13 items) and costs (11 items). Studies of five samples (n=375) have demonstrated that the total BACMEC scale and its subscales are highly reliable and have good convergent, divergent, and concurrent validity (Greenberger et al., 1988).

In part three of the packet, subjects were asked to disclose information about their mother's work status at two stages of development. The stages of development were preschool years (birth to 5 years old), and school years (6-18 years old). The subjects were asked to report whether their mothers were employed part-time, fulltime, or not employed outside the home during each stage of development and whether or not their mother worked out of financial necessity. Subjects also disclosed information about their mother's job, indicating whether it was professional, white collar, or blue collar work. Subjects were also asked to indicate whether or not they had been raised in a single parent household.

Results

Directionally adjusted responses to the BACMEC were totaled for each participant to create two summary measures of attitudes toward maternal employment, one assessing perceived benefits and another assessing perceived costs. In subsequent comparisons of parents from single and two-paycheck families, responses from fathers were analyzed separately from those of mothers.

Analyses of Responses from Fathers

Independent samples t-tests were performed to compare the benefits and costs subscale scores for fathers from single paycheck families and those for fathers from two-paycheck families. A significant difference was found for both summary scales. On the benefits subscale, fathers from two-paycheck families perceived greater advantages associated with maternal employment than did fathers from single paycheck families (two-paycheck: $x=47.78$, s.d.$=10.56$, $n=81$ versus single paycheck: $x=42.31$, s.d.$= 7.82$, $n=26$; $t=2.43$, $df=105$, $p<.05$). On the costs subscale, fathers from two-paycheck families perceived fewer disadvantages associated with maternal employment than did fathers from single paycheck families (two-paycheck: $x=30.33$, s.d.$=11.67$, $n=83$ versus single paycheck: $x=37.56$, s.d.$= 8.76$, $n=34$; $t=3.26$, $df=115$, $p<.05$).

Benefits Subscale Individual Items

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were not employed, fathers whose wives were employed were more likely to feel that sons of mothers who work are more likely to develop respect for women.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers
($t=2.06$; $df=116$; $p<.05$)
BACMEC Item: Boys whose mothers work are more likely to develop respect for women.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	2.94	1.25	34
Two-paycheck	3.48	1.28	84

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were not employed, fathers whose wives were employed were more likely to feel that children of working mothers learn valuable lessons about people they can rely on.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers
($t=3.19$; $df=115$; $p<.01$)
BACMEC Item: Children whose mothers work learn valuable lessons about people they can rely on.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	3.00	1.02	34
Two-paycheck	3.72	1.15	83

Costs Subscale Individual Items

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were employed, fathers whose wives were not employed were more likely to feel that children are less likely form a warm and secure relationship with a mother who is working full time.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers (t=3.13 df=116 p<.05)
BACMEC Item: Chil en are less likely to form a warm and secure relationship with a mother who is working full time.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	3.76	1.30	34
Two-paycheck	2.87	1.45	84

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were employed, fathers whose wives were not employed were more likely to feel that working mothers are more likely to have children with psychological problems.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers (t=2.01 df=116 p<.05)
BACMEC Item: Working mothers are more likely to have children with psychological problems than mothers who do not work outside the home.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	2.89	1.37	34
Two-paycheck	2.35	1.29	84

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were employed, fathers whose wives were not employed were more likely to feel that their children would learn more if their mothers stayed at home.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers (t=2.64; df=76.47 ; p<.05)
BACMEC Item: Young children learn more if their mothers stay at home with them.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	4.09	1.14	34
Two-paycheck	3.43	1.43	84

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were employed, fathers whose wives were not employed were more likely to feel that children whose mothers work are more likely to be left alone and exposed to dangerous situations.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers (t=3.24; df=116 ; p<.05)
BACMEC Item: Children whose mothers work are more likely to be left alone and exposed to dangerous situations.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	3.88	1.20	34

Two-paycheck	3.01	1.37	84

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were not employed, fathers whose wives were employed were more likely to feel that children of working mothers are less well-nourished and don't eat the way they should.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers ($t=2.21$; $df=116$; $p<.05$)
BACMEC Item: Children of working mothers are less well-nourished and don't eat the way they should.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	2.91	1.06	34
Two-paycheck	2.39	1.19	84

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were employed, fathers whose wives were not employed were more likely to feel that children of working mothers suffer because of their mothers are not available when they need them.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers ($t=3.44$; $df=116$; $p<.05$)
BACMEC Item: Children whose mothers work suffer because their mothers are not there when they need them.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	3.82	1.22	34
Two-paycheck	2.92	1.33	84

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were employed, fathers whose wives were not employed were more likely to feel that their children would grow up to be competent parents.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers ($t=2.35$; $df=116$; $p<.05$)
BACMEC Item: Children of working mothers grow up to be less competent parents than other children because they have not had adequate parental role models.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	2.91	1.00	34
Two-paycheck	2.40	1.19	84

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were employed, fathers whose wives were not employed were more likely to feel that children of working mothers develop lower self-esteem because they feel that their mothers believe they are not worth paying attention to.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers ($t=3.41$; $df=116$; $p<.05$)

BACMEC Item: Children of mothers who work develop lower self-esteem because they think they are not worth devoting attention to.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	2.88	.81	34
Two-paycheck	2.23	1.00	84

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to fathers whose wives were employed, fathers whose wives were not employed were more likely to feel that children of working mothers are more likely to experiment with drugs, alcohol and sex at an early age.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family fathers
($t=2.89$; $df=116$; $p< .05$)
BACMEC Item: Children of working mothers are more likely to experiment with drugs, alcohol and sex at an early age.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	3.41	1.21	34
Two-paycheck	2.67	1.29	84

Analyses of Responses from Mothers

Independent samples t-tests were performed to compare the benefits and costs subscale scores for mothers from single paycheck and those for mothers from two-paycheck families. A significant difference was found for the benefits summary scale. On the benefits subscale, mothers from two-paycheck families perceived greater advantages associated with maternal employment than did mothers from single paycheck families (two-paycheck: $x=47.46$, $s.d.=11.20$, $n=112$ versus single paycheck: $x=39.69$, $s.d.= 9.31$, $n=16$; $t=2.64$, $df=126$, $p<.01$). No significant difference was found for the costs summary scale between mothers from single-paycheck and two-paycheck families.

Benefits Subscale Individual Items

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to mothers who did not work, mothers who were employed were more likely to feel that children of working mothers are more independent.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family mothers
($t=2.76$; $df=136$; $p<.01$)
BACMEC Item: Children whose mothers work are more independent and able to do things for themselves.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	3.24	1.44	21
Two-paycheck	4.02	1.14	117

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to mothers who did not work, mothers who were employed were more likely to feel that working mothers are good role models for children for leading busy and productive lives.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family mothers ($t=2.94$; $df=136$; $p<.01$)
BACMEC Item: For young children, working mothers are good role models for leading busy and productive lives.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	2.90	1.44	21
Two-paycheck	3.73	1.14	117

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to mothers who did not work, mothers who were employed were more likely to feel that children whose mothers work learn valuable lessons about people they can rely on.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family mothers ($t=2.62$; $df=135$; $p<.01$)
BACMEC Item: Children whose mothers work learn valuable lessons about people they can rely on.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	2.75	1.12	20
Two-paycheck	3.49	1.17	117

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to mothers who did not work, mothers who were employed were more likely to feel that children of working mothers develop more regard for women's intelligence and competence.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family mothers ($t=2.20$; $df=135$; $p<.05$)
BACMEC Item: Children whose mothers work full time outside the home develop more regard for women's intelligence and competence.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	2.86	1.31	21
Two-paycheck	3.53	1.30	116

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to mothers who did not work, mothers who were employed were more likely to feel that children of working mothers were less likely to develop stereotyped views of men's and women's roles.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family mothers ($t=2.11$; $df=134$; $p<.05$)
BACMEC Item: Children whose mothers work develop less stereotyped views about men's and women's roles.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	3.14	1.11	21

Two-paycheck	3.76	1.25	115

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to mothers who did not work, mothers who were employed were more likely to feel that children of working mothers adapt better to change.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family mothers ($t=2.28$; $df=129$; $p<.05$)
BACMEC Item: Children whose mothers work full time outside the home are more adaptable; they cope better with the unexpected and with changes in plans.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	3.12	1.11	17
Two-paycheck	3.80	1.15	114

Costs Subscale Individual Items

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to mothers who did work, mothers who were not employed were more likely to feel that children whose mothers work are more likely to develop lower self-esteem.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family mothers ($t=2.63$; $df=135$; $p<.01$)
BACMEC Item: Children of mothers who work develop lower self-esteem because they think they are not worth devoting attention to.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	2.57	1.16	21
Two-paycheck	1.97	.93	116

An independent samples t-test revealed that when compared to mothers who did work, mothers who were not employed were more likely to feel that children whose mothers work are more likely to experiment with drugs, alcohol and sex at an early age.

Independent samples t-test comparisons of single and two-paycheck family mothers ($t=2.10$; $df=135$; $p<.05$)
BACMEC Item: Children of working mothers are more likely to experiment with drugs, alcohol and sex at an early age.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Single Paycheck	3.10	1.14	21
Two-paycheck	2.51	1.34	116

Discussion

This study examined the attitudes of married middle-class families with either one or two incomes, toward the effects of maternal employment on children. Overall, the findings in this study suggest that parents' attitudes reflect their own family circumstances. Two pacycheck families endorse this choice, while single paycheck families express attitudes consistent with their family option.

The findings of this study suggest that parents from single-paycheck and two-paycheck families significantly differ from each other in terms of the costs and benefits for children they perceive as being associated with maternal employment. Each group seemed to have somewhat different concerns and beliefs about maternal employment and its effects. Fathers with wives who worked seemed to respond most positively to questions concerning children's developing an egalitarian view of the roles of men and women (boys developing respect for women) and to questions regarding the preparedness of the child for entering the "real world" (learning about who can be relied upon, daughters being prepared to combine work with motherhood should they choose to do so).

Fathers with wives who were full time mothers revealed their concerns about problems with child supervision in two-paycheck families (being left alone and exposed to danger), maternal attachment to children (children developing a warm relationship with mother, children suffering due to mother not being there when needed, children developing lower self-esteem when mother works), and basic care-taking of the children (children learning more if mother stays at home, children of working mothers being under-nourished). These concerns reveal possible feelings among these fathers that a mother's role is to watch over the children, protecting them and being emotionally available to them. Considering the "traditional" background of these families, this view is not surprising.

Mothers who worked believed that maternal employment produced favorable views in children about women (boys developing respect for women, children having regard for women's intelligence and competence, boys developing less stereotyped views about the roles of men and women), and produced independence and coping skills in children (children being more able to do things on their own, children being able to deal with changes). These results would seem to indicate that mothers who work feel that a working mother is a positive role model for children to look up to and that such mothers help children to learn how to function effectively in the world and to view women with respect.

Mothers who did not work only scored significantly different from mothers who did work on two cost items. These items had to do with concerns about children of working mothers engaging in experimentation with drugs, alcohol, and sex at an early age, and children of working mothers developing lower self esteem because they believe they are not worthy of their mothers' attention. This would seem to show a propensity in stay-at-home mothers to feel that staying at home makes them better able to protect their children from the dangers of the world and to make their children feel loved. The fact that stay-at-home mothers only responded differently from working mothers on two cost items may also reflect the growing acceptance of maternal employment in society and among women in particular.

These findings are not particularly surprising. All groups seemed to feel that their family's situation regarding employment status was more desirable for children's well being than the alternative. Surely many people are defensive when asked about their family status, given the costs associated with maternal employment (whether real or imagined) and, more recently,

the stigma sometimes associated with wives who do not work. The desire to support one's family situation almost certainly played a role in the subjects' answering of the BACMEC items.

There were, of course, a few limitations to this study. The number of participants was fairly small. Also, the participants came from a limited geographical range, which also hampers our ability to generalize our results to a wider population. Related to this limitation was a lack of racial and ethnic diversity among the participants.

It would seem that further research in this area is warranted in order to determine why the differences exist between these specified groups. Further research in this area might include larger sample sizes, different geographical locations, and consideration of differences among various racial and ethnic groups.

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